

## Southern Appalachian Creature Feature Podcasts

### Forest Loss

Greetings and welcome to the Southern Appalachian Creature Feature.

According to U.S. Forest Service researchers and their partners, between 2000 and 2012 the world lost 660,000 square miles of forest, an area more than twice the size of Texas.

But the scientists looked beyond simple acreage lost, and examined patterns of forest loss, providing an idea of forest fragmentation. If half of a thousand-acre forest is cut, how the remaining 500 acres are distributed – in one solid clump, or as a long, thin line for example – has a tremendous impact on the ecological role that forest plays.

Researchers mapped the forests of 2000 and 2012 and examined the patterns of change. They found a shift toward more fragmented forests as interior forests were lost at three times the rate of overall forest loss.

All categories of forest experienced this trend:

- Temperate coniferous forests experienced the largest percentage of loss,
- Tropical and subtropical moist broadleaf forests lost the most area of interior forest, and
- Cold-climate boreal forests and taiga lost interior forest at the highest rate.

Researchers note that the reasons for losses, and therefore the consequences, depend on local circumstances, as land use changes resulting in permanent deforestation have a much greater impact than temporary deforestation.

For WNCW and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, this is Gary Peeples.